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LETTER DATED 31 MARCH 1994 FROM THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. OF THE PERMANENT MISSION OF AZERBAIJAN TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit herewith the text of a statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic adopted on 31 March 1994.

I should be grateful if you would have the text of the present letter and its enclosure circulated as a document of the Security Council.

(Signed) Yashar T. ALIYEV
Chargé d'affaires a.i.

Annex

[Original: Russian]

Statement dated 31 March 1994 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic

On 30 March 1994, the Acting Press Secretary of the President of Armenia, L. Zurabyan, issued an official statement expressing regret over the "premature" statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran concerning the Iranian aircraft disaster which took place on 18 March 1994 over part of the territory of the Azerbaijani Republic occupied by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia, 3 kilometres north of the town of Khankendi, and which resulted in the deaths of 32 people, the majority of them women and children. The statement further alleged that the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran was issued before the investigation into the circumstances of the disaster by the commissions specially established for the purpose by the Islamic Republic of Iran and the Commonwealth of Independent States had been completed and before any definitive conclusions were reached.

In this connection, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic considers it essential to state that it regards this statement by the Armenian leadership as a deliberate and clumsy attempt to misinform the world community.

It should be pointed out once again, first, that the fact that the Iranian aircraft was shot down by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia over occupied Azerbaijani territory has been confirmed by the findings of the special commission of the Iranian Government, as reflected in the statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, which places full responsibility for the tragedy which occurred in the skies over the town of Khankendi on the Republic of Armenia. Seen in this light, the Armenian statement is indirectly aimed at accusing the Iranian side of bias and a lack of objectivity in investigating the tragedy.

Second, the Azerbaijani side has no knowledge of the existence of any special commission of the Commonwealth of Independent States, of which Azerbaijan is a full member, to investigate the circumstances of the aircraft disaster.

Third, the inhuman act by the armed forces of the Republic of Armenia took place in occupied territory belonging to the sovereign State of Azerbaijan which Armenia is not only striving to annex but in which it is behaving in a proprietary manner, attempting to arrogate to itself the piratical right to shoot down the civil aircraft of third States in violation of all the rules of international law.

As has occurred repeatedly in the past, all the barbarous actions and acts of terrorism committed by the Armenian side against Azerbaijan are accompanied by an unbridled campaign of propaganda which involves not only the mass

information media of a neighbouring State but also the leadership of the Republic of Armenia. The aim of these false statements is to mislead the world community and conceal the expansionist policies of Armenia which are directed towards the annexation of territory belonging to the Azerbaijani Republic.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Azerbaijani Republic once again condemns this act of terrorism and places full responsibility for it on the Republic of Armenia.